



The Birmingham News

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY DAY 7 OF THE REGULAR SESSION

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Bill adds restrictions to young drivers:

The Alabama House has passed a bill that adds additional restrictions for some teenage drivers.

The House voted 80-10 for the bill that requires some 16- and 17-year-old drivers to have restricted licenses. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Under the restrictions, the young drivers would be allowed to have only one person in the car with them and would have an 11 p.m. curfew on weekends.

Law now requires young drivers with restricted licenses to have no more than three passengers and requires them to be off the road by midnight on weekends.

Lawmakers target texting drivers:

MONTGOMERY - An Alabama Senate committee has voted to make it illegal to send and read text messages while driving.

The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee voted 4-1 Tuesday for a bill by Republican Sen. Jabo Waggoner of Vestavia Hills. Waggoner said drivers who send text messages are endangering other motorists. His bill provides a \$25 fine for a first offense and \$50 fine for a second offense.

Republican Sen. Scott Beason of Gardendale abstained on the bill, saying police should use the existing law on reckless driving.

The Alabama House passed a similar bill by Republican Rep. Jim McClendon of Springville on Thursday. For the Legislature to ban text messaging while driving, the Senate will have to pass McClendon's bill, or the Senate and House will have to pass Waggoner's bill.

House cracks down on Web predators:

The Alabama House has passed two bills aimed at making it easier for law enforcement officers to stop sexual predators who use the computer to lure young victims. The House voted 84-0 for a bill that says a person can be charged with using the computer to lure a child for the purpose of sexual relations, even if the victim is actually an undercover law enforcement officer.

The sponsor, Rep. Steve McMillan, said the bill would close a loophole that has caused charges to be dropped in some cases. McMillan is a Republican from Gulf Shores.

The House also voted 96-0 for a bill that allows police to confiscate computers and other electronic equipment used to lure a child for sexual purposes.

HOUSE:

Approved a bill that says Alabama's oil and gas severance tax will be based on gross proceeds from the sale of the oil or gas. Goes to Senate.

Approved a bill that allows probate judges to redact Social Security numbers and birth dates from official records that are published on the Internet. Goes to Senate.

Approved legislation to prevent inmates from profiting from their crimes through the sale of certain art work or literature. Goes to Senate.

SENATE:

Gave final approval to bills to continue the existence of five state regulatory boards, including the Board of Nursing and Board of Funeral Service. Go to governor.

AGENDA:

Senate Education Committee meets at 8:30 a.m. today in room 727 of the State House to consider a bill raising the school dropout age.

Senate Finance and Taxation-Education Committee meets at 9:30 a.m. today in room 727 to consider legislation removing the sales tax on groceries.

Senate Judiciary Committee meets in room 727 following a Finance and Taxation-General Fund Committee meeting to consider a bill expanding Alabama's death penalty law.

House Public Safety Committee meets at 9 a.m. today in room 602 to consider a Senate-passed bill to increase penalties for failure to properly tie down steel coils being hauled on trucks.

House Judiciary Committee meets at 9 a.m. today in room 123 to consider a bill to rewrite the state ethics law.

House and Senate meet at 10 a.m. Thursday. The Associated Press --

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